

# Introduction to Arizona's Academic Standards in the Arts

## Philosophy and Rationale for the Arts

The arts are essential in education for they provide students with the means to think, feel, and understand the world around them in ways unique and distinct from other academic disciplines. These skills have been recognized as essential to lifelong success both in and out of school by a variety of education and civic leaders, including the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Education Commission of the States, the Arts Education Partnership, and *BusinessWeek*.

## Arts Education in Arizona

Arizona has recognized the importance of arts education for its students in a variety of ways, including:

- Requiring music and visual arts be taught in grades K-8
- Creating high quality certifications (endorsements) for teachers in the areas of dance, music, theatre and visual arts
- Requiring a fine arts high school credit for admission to our state's universities
- Adopting Academic Standards in the Arts, with rigorous, sequential guidelines for creating quality arts education for Arizona's students.

## Arts Standards

The Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts provide guidance on what a student should know and be able to do in all four arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre and visual arts. Every student should receive arts instruction through the intermediate level in all art forms, as well as reach an advanced level in at least one art form prior to graduation from high school. We believe these Standards will help schools develop quality arts education programs for their students. A quality arts education program:

1. provides essential ways to understand and express life experiences
2. develops deep understanding of past and present cultures/peoples
3. prepares students for active participation in creating the culture of the present and future
4. develops imagination
5. enables students to make informed aesthetic choices
6. provide a creative, motivating vehicle for mastering technology, including multimedia
7. helps develop the full range of students' abilities
8. prepares students for enjoyable recreation and leisure time
9. prepares students for success in a wide variety of careers
10. develops self-discipline and focus
11. develops the capacity to refine work, aspiring to high quality standards
12. creates a positive, inclusive school atmosphere
13. fosters creativity and independence
14. develops the ability to solve complex, often ambiguous, problems
15. develops teamwork
16. enhances self-esteem
17. increases learning across the curriculum

## Recent Publications and Research Supporting Quality Arts Education

Organization	Publication	Quote
Arts Education Partnership: <a href="http://www.aep-arts.org">www.aep-arts.org</a>	<i>Third Space: When Learning Matters</i> . 2005. A study of 10 high-poverty schools throughout the country (including Peter Howell Elementary in Tucson) and how they are using the arts to change their school environments	The arts help to make learning matter to students. In the schools we studied, the arts put students in active and meaningful roles in their classrooms and connected schools to students' lives and cultures.
BusinessWeek	<i>Educating for the Workplace through the Arts</i> , October 1996.	Arts education helps the nation produce citizens and workers who are comfortable using many different symbol systems (verbal, mathematical, visual, auditory). Arts education develops the very capacities that business leaders, educators, and parents want the schools to provide our children: creative problem solving, analytical thinking, collaborative skills and judgment.
Education Commission of the States: <a href="http://www.ecs.org">www.ecs.org</a> .	Arts in Education Initiative, 2004-2006. Initiated by Gov. Huckabee of Arkansas.	To put it simply, we need to focus on the arts in education because the arts teach kids how to learn. Ensuring that an adequate arts education is available in all schools will not only enhance student achievement, it also will give children access to activities that enrich their lives outside the classroom - Governor Mike Huckabee, Arkansas
National Association of State Boards of Education: <a href="http://www.nasbe.org">www.nasbe.org</a> .	<i>The Complete Curriculum, Ensuring a Place for the Arts and Foreign Languages in America's Schools</i> , October, 2003.	There is a preponderance of evidence that arts education matters. Students who study and participate in the arts do substantially better than those who do not on almost every academic measure...However, those who justify the study of the arts solely because of their impact on student performance in other subjects may be neglecting an important point: that these fields of study teach things no other subject can; they tap into deeply cultural and expressive aspects of peoples' lives that are at the center of what it means to be human (paraphrased).